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WHAM! BAM! THANK YOU, HAMM! {page 10}

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T-totalers? Alcohol ads to dry up along T

Displays that promote alcohol no longer welcome in stations, on trains Adviser calls it a mistake Riders angry about move with cuts, fare hikes looming {page 02}

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Like the subway token, these alcohol ads at North Station will become things of the past.

Metropolitik

Obama talks a good game, but let's get real

Analysis of Tuesday night's State of the Union address reveals trademark optimism but long road ahead {page 07}

Only an 'Idiot' would miss this

Green Day musical is punk rock fun and Broadway glitz with great tunes {page 13}

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MBTA stations, trains to go dry with booze ad ban

MassDOT sec. says loss in revenue is negligible ◐ MBTA advisor calls ad ban a mistake ◐ Teen advocacy group asked T to pull alcohol ads in August

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ No more walking by ads for your favorite adult drink.

▶ Your ad here? These alcohol advertisements in North Station will be a thing of the past starting July.

An expert on the MBTA's financial status said yesterday the T's move to pull alcohol advertisements from its trains and stations is a huge mistake.

"They have a giant financial crisis," said Brian S. Kane, budget and policy analyst for the MBTA Advisory Board. "They should be maximizing revenue through things like advertising and I think the Department of Transportation should rethink this prohibition."

The ban on alcohol ads will set the cash-strapped T back $1.5 million in revenue, according to MassDOT Secretary Rich Davey.

While riders will have to bid farewell to that oddly sexy Svedka Vodka robot they see while trekking through T stops, Davey said the money loss is negligible.

"It's the right thing to do," he said, "and we are confident we can resell a lot of that space."

Kane said he worries riders are going to have to "eat that loss" in other ways, like the recently proposed service cuts and fare hikes.

Alcohol isn't the first thing to get blocked by the T. Davey said there are rules for advertising with the transit agency. The agency doesn't allow political ads and removed an anti-Sen. Scott Brown ad last summer. Ads that promote tobacco use, violence and firearms are also banned.

STEVE ANNEAR
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1.3M
Number of people exposed to advertisements on the T daily

Students inspire ad ban

Davey said the ban, which will start July 1, was partly inspired by a youth coalition that spoke against the use of alcohol ads in August.

"We are trying to encourage healthy behavior," he said.

The T is one of the last transit agencies in the nation still running ads for beer and spirits.

However, Kane said even without the ads on T property, kids are going to continue to be exposed to alcohol.

"It doesn't mean they won't see it on other media everyday," he said. "It's just going to cost the T $1.5 million every year that they really need."

Riders react

Once commuters learned of the T's decision to block the advertisements, they reacted strongly:

- **@J_Cakes09:** "#MBTA can suck one, cutting ad revenue when you continuously voice ur obscene amount of debt, clean it up Richard Davey"
- **@melaniefrancis:** "#MBTA bans alcohol ads & will lose $1.5M in revenue. I'm not one to join the mbta haters but this totally sucks."
- **@s_thorn:** "Such a poorly run organization"
- **@kyleellenxo:** "confused as to why MBTA would turn down any revenue when faced with the current deficit."
- **@BJFountain:** "So the #MBTA is about $100+ million in the hole and wants to cut service and raise money BUT decline ads that would bring in $1.5 mil. #FAIL"
- **@rwHigginson:** "I hope the fools fighting to ban alcohol ads on the #MBTA are planning to pay for the huge increase in my monthly pass!"
- **@erineblake:** "So ban ads and raise fees? Great thinking"
- **@DaralStern:** "@mbtaGM Who is running the #MBTA? After the morning i had, this literally set me into a fit of rage."

In the news

$32.3B

Gov. Deval Patrick released his fiscal year 2013 budget yesterday, which is a 2.98 percent increase from the current year estimated spending levels. The budget calls for 400 layoffs in the executive branch, which would amount to $30 million in savings. It also includes the closing of a prison in Norfolk. Funding for community colleges would increase by $10 million. METRO

Today's local tweet

"Odd #mbta happening of the week: kid lighting up not one but two cigarettes while train is moving/doors shut. #notnormal"

@HERENDEA, OBSERVING SOME UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR ON HER RIDE HOME

▶ Steven Kane

Conductor stops theft during ride

MIDDLEBOROUGH. A Bridgewater man was busted by a train conductor for allegedly stealing a woman's wallet while she slept on a Commuter Rail train Tuesday night.

Steven Kane, 34, was arrested after a conductor confronted him near the Middleborough/Lakeville stop.

A woman noticed her wallet was missing and asked if anyone saw who took it. A passenger pointed to Kane, according to police. The conductor followed Kane out of the train and told him to give the wallet back. METRO

If it's opium, it isn't legal

BOSTON. The son of Legal Sea Foods president Roger Berkowitz pleaded not guilty yesterday to trafficking raw opium, according to the Herald.

Police said they made an undercover delivery of a seized package addressed to Matthew Berkowitz, 32, of South Boston, from the U.K. that contained 130 poppy plants. Bail was set at $7,500. METRO

Boat drifts three years

NANTUCKET. A 26-foot pleasure boat that was left to drift near Nantucket more than three years ago was located 20 miles off the northern coast of Spain last week.

Officials received a report of the found boat Tuesday from Madrid and linked it to a search-and-rescue case that occurred near Nantucket in 2008, according to the Coast Guard. METRO

Bars looking for solutions to looming Super Bowl blackout

Many bars in Boston subscribe to DIRECTV and are facing the devastating possibility of not being able to air the Super Bowl because of the standoff between the satellite provider and local stations.

Sunbeam Television Corp. — owner of WHDH-TV (Channel 7) and WLVI-TV (Channel 56) — on Jan. 14 blacked out its stations on DIRECTV because of a dispute over the fees the satellite company pays to Sunbeam for the rights to carry its programming. NBC is carrying the Super Bowl this year and the local NBC affiliate is WHDH-TV.

Bars such as the Pour House on Boylston Street consider Super Bowl Sunday a major moneymaker, and managers are "freaking out" that a resolution may not be reached in time.

"We have no idea what we are going to do. We are freaking out. For whatever reason they have decided not to show the Super Bowl, it's going to screw us," said Hillary Branyik, a manager at the Pour House.

Restaurants with cable and antenna service instead of satellite are hoping to gain a competitive edge.

"I think it'll get resolved by the time the Super Bowl comes on. ... If it didn't, we would definitely benefit," said Maria Terranova, owner of Mike's Food & Spirits.

CHRISTINA WALLACE
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Pols urge solution

Earlier this week Sen. John Kerry sent a letter to Sunbeam and DIRECTV urging them to hash out an agreement so local viewers wouldn't be shut out of the Super Bowl.

DIRECTV released a statement Tuesday saying they would restore Sunbeam programming while negotiations continue if Sunbeam agrees.

Sunbeam officials could not be reached for comment but recently told the Herald it is concerned about restoring programming without a resolution. METRO/CW

Dorchester. Jesus defiled

▶ A statue of Jesus outside the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta church was found headless in Dorchester.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

Boston police said they have some leads about who damaged a Jesus statue outside a Dorchester church, but they still need the public's help with additional information. A priest at Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta at St. Margaret's Church discovered the damage Sunday. METRO

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More child porn charges in Newton

"What we're going to do is put together a joint group of city and school members to review our hiring procedures and training procedures."
MAYOR SETTI WARREN

For the second time in about a week, a Newton worker has been charged with possessing and sharing images of child pornography and city officials said they are going to review their hiring process.

Peter Buchanan, who worked as an audio-visual classifier at the Newton Free Library, pleaded not guilty during his arraignment yesterday. He was held on $5,000 bail.

The 47-year-old Newton resident was arrested at his home Tuesday after an investigation into a file-sharing site led authorities to his computer.

BOSTON GLOBE/POOL

▶ Newton library worker Peter Buchanan appears in court for arraignment.

Authorities said they searched Buchanan's home and found nearly two dozen images on his computer.

Last week, authorities arrested David Ettlinger, 34, a second-grade teacher at a Newton school and accused him of creating and possessing images of child pornography. He allegedly taped a sexual assault of a preteen girl. Ettlinger also had a Sittercity.com account and advertised babysitting services online, according to The Boston Globe.

Newton officials said that both men had background checks done and passed.

Buchanan's last check was in 2003 and he had no disciplinary record or complaints.

However, Mayor Setti Warren said the city is going to examine the hiring process.

"We're going to aggressively look at it," he said.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
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News in brief

T leads way in apps

While the T might not always arrive on time, one thing they are doing right is hosting the best mobile apps in the country.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the T was singled out for leading the way nationally in facilitating smartphone transit apps.

In a review of 276 transit agencies, DOT found only 15 that offer riders real-time information.

State saving with warm weather

The state Department of Transportation has saved more than $20.1 million on snow removal in January this year compared to last year due to the lack of winter weather. According to a recent MassDOT report, the agency shoveled out roughly $31.5 million on snow and ice cleanup between Jan. 1 and 24 in 2011. This year the state has spent around $11 million.

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Billionaires split over Obama SOTU

The rich and powerful were divided at their annual huddle yesterday regarding Barack Obama's threat to raise their taxes, with some saying it could hurt growth, but others arguing he was right to address capitalism's imbalances.

The State of the Union was delivered on the eve of World Economic Forum in the Swiss ski resort of Davos, which found many of the world's titans of industry and politics in reflective mood, focusing on whether capitalism needs to be more fair to survive.

"I happen to be one of the billionaires who believe that the rich do need to pay more taxes and I do support the Obama program in that respect," investor George Soros said in Davos.

"I happen to be one of the billionaires who believe that the rich do need to pay more taxes and I do support the Obama program in that respect."
GEORGE SOROS, INVESTOR

But other Davos regulars don't like being in the president's crosshairs.

"I don't think any presidential election in the history of America has been won on the politics of envy and I think if anything it divides the country more than unites it," said John Studzinski, senior managing director of investment and advisory firm Blackstone Group. **REUTERS**

▶ George Soros, chairman of Soros Fund Management, speaks to the media yesterday at the Swiss resort of Davos.

GETTY IMAGES

US special forces rescue two Somalia hostages

U.S. special forces swooped into Somalia yesterday and rescued an American and a Dane after a killing their nine kidnappers, in a rare raid into the Horn of Africa nation to free foreign captives.

American Jessica Buchanan, 32, and Poul Hagen Thisted, 60, of Denmark, humanitarian aid workers for a demining group, had been kidnapped from the town of Galkayo in the semi-autonomous Galmudug region in October.

"This is yet another message to the world that the United States of America will stand strongly against any threats to our people," U.S. President Barack Obama said in a statement.

"This is yet another message to the world that the United States of America will stand strongly against any threats to our people."
PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

The rescue team included forces hailing from the same elite Navy SEAL unit that killed al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden last year in a raid on his compound in Pakistan, a U.S. official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity.
REUTERS

▶ Rupert Murdoch

Murdoch music startup is bankrupt before launch

Beyond Oblivion, a digital music startup backed by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. and investment bank Allen & Co. Director Stanley Shuman has filed for bankruptcy protection after spending millions of dollars building a service that never saw the light of day.

Beyond Oblivion owed creditors between $100 million and $500 million, with estimated assets of less than $10 million, according to a Chapter 11 filing at Bankruptcy Court. **REUTERS**

Giffords quits for recovery

WASHINGTON. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, gravely wounded a year ago in a deadly Tucson, Ariz., shooting spree, submitted her resignation from Congress yesterday to focus on her recovery.

Her resignation went into effect at the end of the day yesterday.
REUTERS

Man had gun at home of W.

A man detained outside the home of former President George W. Bush had a weapon in his car, but was released after questioning on Tuesday, a U.S. Secret Service spokesman said yesterday.

Spokesman Ed Donovan said the man, who was not identified, told agents and Dallas police that he was spiritually told to pick up a package at the Bush home. He had a permit to carry a gun, which was found in his vehicle, Donovan said.
REUTERS

State of the Union: Optimistic pablum

Metropolitik

BRAYDEN SIMMS

POLITICAL REALISM FOR THE URBAN PROLETARIAT

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SAUL LOEB-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

▶ President Barack Obama spoke for the rights of the 99 percent, but is his rhetoric an assortment of impossibly empty promises?

President Barack Obama's State of the Union speech on Tuesday was, as many have pointed out, full of bombastic campaign rhetoric — which makes total sense, as that's pretty much the point. Obama did say a lot of stuff worthy of support: Talk of tax reform and education investment is a step in the right direction. Of course, any initiative more ambitious than a routine debt limit authorization may have significant trouble getting through Congress, but it's nice to pretend. Speaking of pretend, we fact check the president:

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.

▶ **Military analogy.** Obama bookends his policy proposals and congressional critiques with a glorification of American military efficiency. Praising advancement in the U.S. war on terror, Obama lauds the "courage, selflessness, and teamwork of America's armed forces," saying civilians could benefit "if we followed their example."
Reality: U.S. citizens are not members of an elite fighting unit. Cooperation is nice, but it's insane to project our rigid, hierarchical military structure onto a democracy where everyone has a right to individuality. Obama also overstates gains in Afghanistan and Iraq, where historic sectarian divisions threaten to put the lie to trillions in wasteful military expenditures.

▶ **Financial industry.** The president claims to have put "in place new rules to hold Wall Street accountable, so a crisis like that never happens again." And later says he "will not go back to the days when Wall Street was allowed to play by its own set of rules."
Reality: Legislators have not gone nearly far enough to ensure that we don't suffer another financial crisis down the line. This shouldn't be terribly surprising due to a deadly pair of conditions: the disinclination among most politicians to upset the apple cart and legislate against the interests of their Wall Street donors; and, perhaps more inflammatory, the irrational trust bestowed upon financial industry veterans — who, under Obama as under previous presidents, hold high advisory roles allowing them to manipulate reform law. (The much-ballyhooed Dodd-Frank legislation naturally ignores the structural causes of 2008's collapse.)

For complaints, suggestions and lucrative third-party communiques on behalf of embattled West African monarchs, please e-mail brayden.simms@metro.us

▶ **Deficit reduction.** "When it comes to the deficit, we've already agreed to more than $2 trillion in cuts and savings. But we need to do more."
Reality: Contrary to the Tea Party push to "cut, cut, cut", most influential economists agree that spending is the sure path toward growth. The president weakens his ability to fix the economy when he repeats the unfactual rhetoric of the right. Think of government spending as a student loan for the betterment of America's future: Students must take on debt to increase their earning potential; later, after putting loan monies to good use, they will be in a position to pay down that debt. Government needs to provide more stimulus to create jobs and prosperity. Once that is achieved, we can safely deal with the debt issue.

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myentertainment

2

THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

Get better soon, Demi!

Moore enters rehab

Demi Moore has entered rehab after being rushed to the hospital Monday night for an alleged prescription pill overdose, according to TMZ. Despite a frantic 911 call and an ambulance dispatched to Moore's home, the actress' reps insist Moore's trip to rehab is for "exhaustion" and nothing more. "Because of the stresses in her life right now, Demi has chosen to seek professional assistance to treat her exhaustion and improve her overall health," her reps say in a statement. "She looks forward to getting well and is grateful for the support of her family and friends."

Radar Online reports that actually, Moore had a seizure before she was rushed to the hospital and is now being treated "for anorexia, as well as other issues," a source told the site.

Meanwhile, on the same night she had her breakdown, her estranged husband, **Ashton Kutcher**, was seen partying with a bevy of beauties at a **Bruno Mars** concert in Brazil.

It's interesting, isn't it? We spend a lot of time (and editorial space) idolizing these celebrities. We're green-eyed about their wealth, beauty and success. But whoa — when they crash, they really crash. We might not be as thin or as rich, but things also don't seem to implode as spectacularly. And really, Demi. Don't let this Ashton mess bring you down. You can — and will — do better.

The ring!

Britney is a free woman?

Britney Spears and fiance **Jason Trawick** are reportedly planning to get married on Valentine's Day in Maui, according to Hollyscoop. And just in time for her to tie the knot, Spears' dad is reportedly ready to end his conservatorship, which has him in control of decisions affecting her personal and professional life. "Jamie wants to go to court in early February so Britney will be a free woman in every sense when she marries," a source says, though some predict that the conservatorship will remain in effect for her business affairs.

Let's hope things continue on a steady upward climb for Spears. That conservatorship was the best thing to ever happen to her — mentally and professionally.

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Ricky Gervais is celebrating his fans, Victoria Beckham is snacking, Joan Rivers is not a great audience member and Denis Leary is not optimistic about relationships.

@rickygervais: For my 2000th tweet, I give you my favourite ever quote from a "fan" "I used to love Ricky Gervais, but he ruined Extras for me" Amazing.

@victoriabeckham: I'm addicted to kale!! wash, break into small pieces, sprinkle a little salt and roast, it's so good and amazing for u!!!

@Joan_Rivers: Cooper's 10 year-old friend Russell tries to do stand-up comedy so I do what any loving, supportive Grandma would do: I heckle the kid.

@denisleary: Man marries dead girlfriend. I give it 3 weeks before she says "you seem so distant."

Beckham

Talking points

Behind Klum's divorce decision

Heidi Klum's decision to separate from husband **Seal** was apparently motivated by wanting to escape his "diva" behavior, according to Hollywood Life. "Heidi's first priority has always been her marriage, but she felt like Seal wasn't meeting her halfway," a source says. "She had to take drastic measures to show Seal she wouldn't put up with his behavior anymore. Raising happy and healthy kids is now her No. 1 priority." The source adds that divorce might not actually be inevitable at this point. "I could see Heidi threatening Seal with a divorce because he thought she would never do such a thing," the source says. "This may push Seal to finally get the help he needs to deal with his temper in a more constructive manner."

▶ Chastain received a standing ovation for her Oscar nom.

Chastain's fashion faux pas?

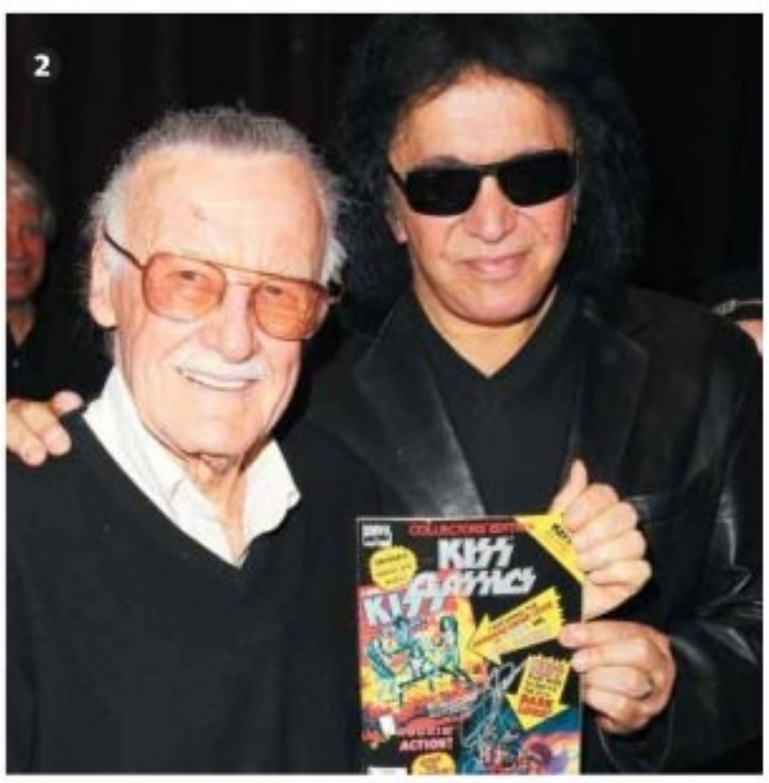
Jessica Chastain made a bit of a fashion faux pas when she answered her mobile phone during the Armani Prive show at Paris Fashion Week, but she had a very good reason: The 30-year-old actress was receiving word of her Oscar nomination for her role in "The Help." When word spread, her fellow attendees — including **Cameron Diaz**, **Colin Firth**'s wife **Livia** and Vogue Italia Editor-in-Chief **Franca Sozzani** — gave Chastain a standing ovation.

Paradis addresses break-up rumors

During an interview with French TV show "Le Grand Journal," **Vanessa Paradis** addressed — in a way — the rumors about her relationship with **Johnny Depp** being on the rocks. "They are all false," she says of rumors about her relationship in general. "Here, this is one [that] could hurt my family. After that ... they say that we have 52 houses in France, we separate in winter, we get married every summer. Me, I'm in my 12th pregnancy."

Dunst's new man

Kirsten Dunst didn't shy away from the public displays of affection with new boyfriend **Garrett Hedlund** while hanging out at the Sundance Film Festival this week, according to People magazine. "Kirsten and Garrett have been spending time together since the holidays," a source says.



There's nothing else going on in Hollywood besides being in Utah

1. While at Sundance, **Lil Jon** and skateboarder **The Dingo** showed up at the Oakley party on Sunday in Park City, Utah.

2. Stan Lee and **Gene Simmons** showed off a "Kiss Classics" comic book on Tuesday in Park City, Utah.

3. Michael Fitzpatrick of Fitz and the Tantrums performed during the "SPIN Sessions" on Monday at Sundance.

4. Christina Hendricks popped up at Day 4 of Nintendo 3DS Experience Lounge on Monday in Park City.

5. Chris Rock attended the Bing Speakers Series with the cast of "2 Days in New York" on Tuesday in Park City.

6. Kirsten Dunst hit up the "Bachelorette" after-party on Monday during Sundance.

7. Anthony Mackie looked super adorable at the SAGIndie Actors Only brunch during the film festival on Sunday in Park City.

1: MICHAEL ROVAC/WIREIMAGE
2: KIS SCARBICS/GETTY IMAGES
3, 5: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR BING
4: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES FOR NINTENDO
6: MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES FOR BACHELORETTE
7: FRED HUDES/GETTY IMAGES

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before
AFTER
She was born with her intestines twisted, her parents feeling hopeless without a way out, participated of the Healing by Hands and now she is HEALED and back to normal!"
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(Wood Island Station-Blue Line: Corner with Moore st)
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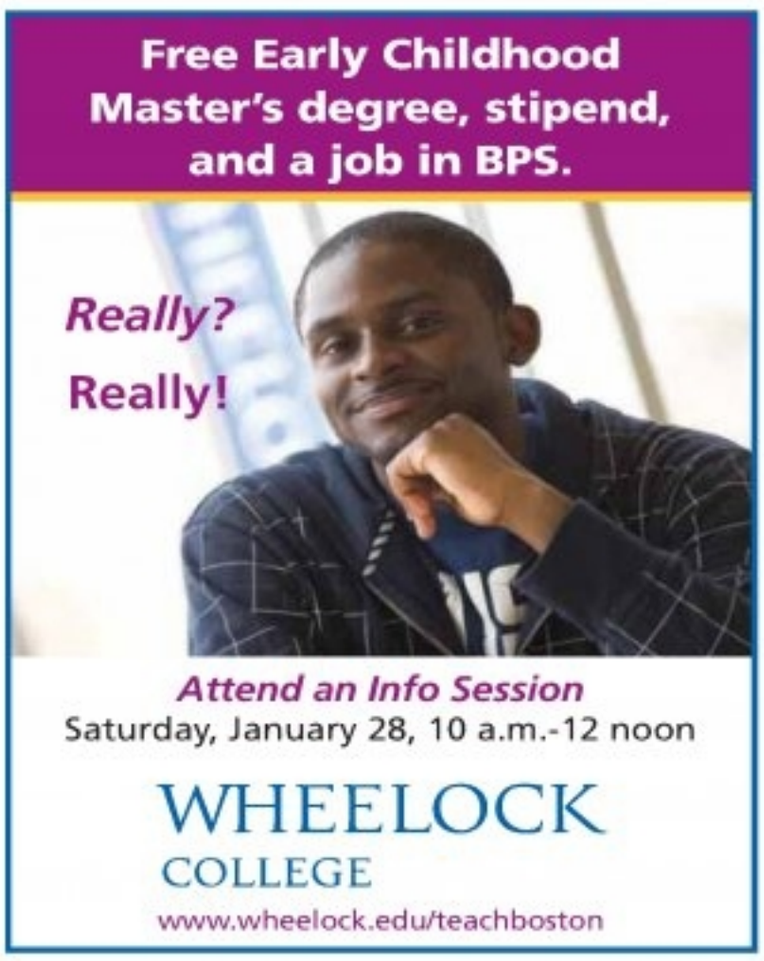

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'Happy Valentine's! Love, Jon Hamm'

The minute those Christmas decorations come down, inevitably, the Valentine's Day hearts and cupids go up. Singletons surely dread it, but there's a way to cheer up them and/or the "Mad Men" fetishist in your life.

JD Beebe designed the "Hamm-o-gram" "to make anyone lonely on Valentine's Day forget about their moody blues." For five dollars, you can have a personalized card — not an e-card — picturing "Mad Men" star Jon Hamm, mailed to a soon-to-be deliriously grateful recipient.

▶ Go to www.hammogram.com to order your own Hamm-o-gram for Valentine's Day.

And guess what? Not only will you be bringing the joy of hot Hamm to others, you'll also be donating to charity. Beebe explains: "I came up with the idea easily enough — Jon Hamm rhymes with gram (brilliant I know) — but I do like my silly projects to do some good. In an effort to be philanthropic and not get sued by the Hamm brigade, I chose A Caring Hand (for bereaved children and families) as a charity partner. This was simply because Mr. Hamm actually lost his parents at a young age, and since I couldn't find any charities that he himself donated to, I wanted to make it personal enough that he might see the good in it."

Everyone wins with the Hamm-o-gram. Could Charlie Day Chocolates be next?

HEIDI PATALANO
heidi.patalano@metro.us

T|A|G
theater & arts guide

MUSIC

NEC NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY
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Two operas by Maurice Ravel
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Ravel's only two operas are gems of orchestral color, inventive storytelling and his unique compositional voice.
Sung in French with English surtitles.
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Box Office: (617) 912-9222
http://bostonconservatory.ticketforce.com
www.bostonconservatory.edu

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project
BMOP
Strange Bedfellows: Unexpected Concertos
BMOP performs concertos by Andrew Norman, Keeril Makan, Avner Dorman, Lucio Berio, and Horn Concerto by Eric Chasalow featuring Bruno Schneider.
Conducted by Gil Rose.
Friday, January 27, 2012 at 8pm
Jordan Hall at New England Conservatory, 30 Gainsborough St.
Jordan Hall Box Office: 617.585.1260
$10-$52 / $15 students (with ID) / 10% off for seniors / www.bmop.org

To advertise in this directory contact Tiffany Carnuccio at 617-532-0121 or email: tiffany.carnuccio@metro.us

EVENTS

Reform Jewish Outreach Boston
Welcoming Interfaith Couples & Individuals Exploring Judaism
A Taste of Judaism: Are You Curious?
Thursday evenings, February 2, 9 & 16, 2012 at Temple Shalom in Newton, Free but pre-registration required, jschwartz@urj.org, 617-928-0012, www.reformjewishoutreachboston.org
Explore Reform Judaism's relevance in today's world. Students are invited to learn about Jewish perspectives on topics of spirituality, ethics and community. All are welcome. Questions and lively discussions encouraged. Designed for beginners, Jewish or not. Taught by Reform Rabbis.

MUSIC

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by Marc-Antoine Charpentier
This gripping biblical drama tells the tragic love story of David, future King of Israel & Jonathan, doomed son of Saul
"...this will be a splendid production." -BMInt
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First Church Cambridge
www.heliosopera.com

THEATER

DEATH of a SALESMAN
Pulitzer Winner by Arthur Miller
A profound classic drama revitalized for a new generation
Directed by Kevin Mark Kline
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Jan 29 and Feb 5 at 4 pm
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Make-up Sara Grundin Model Lana P

Reader love notes

Enter for a chance to win a trip to Madrid! Post your love note online at **metro classifiedsus.adperfect.com**. We'll run it in print and online on Valentine's Day.

▶ *Jim — from the start life has been wonderful with you. ILYA. Bacione, Frank*
▶ ***Stoney-You Put My Love On Top!—Marlo***
I love you Officer D! <3always Moll-Doll
▶ ***L. J. — Being with u completed me in every way. I miss you. A.C.***
▶ *Piggy — i call you piggy bc you're pretty in pink. But your heat is pure gold. Love you shann. JonA*
▶ ***Hahnybun, you complete me! <3 Your Rose***
▶ *BG, From SF to NYC I love thee tremendously — KV*
▶ ***ADB I love u and that's a fact!***
▶ *I've found the one! MLB loves RBJ (aka Sleepyhead)*
▶ ***Anthony, You are my homerun! Love, Jessica***

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KIDDING AROUND

Seven tips for where to take the wee ones ◗ It's winter, and the kids are bored ◗ Metro shares the best local ways to keep your children happy

Magic Beans Opening
Saturday, 11 a.m.
The Shops at Prudential Center
776 Boylston St., Boston
866-600-2326
www.mbeans.com
At 11 a.m., the world's first all-kids kazoo flash mob will herald the opening of Magic Beans. A whole day of free events for families follows — Elmo will dish out free Pinkberry minis from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. — until 6 p.m.

FreeRide Competition Series
Sunday
USA Snowboarder's Association Competition Series
Feb. 5
Nashoba Valley Ski Area
79 Power St., Westford
978-692-3033
www.skinashoba.com
Not only are these two events extremely cool, but if you go to Nashoba during February school vacation, get a kid's three-day lesson and lift tickets for $185. Don't forget the ginormous snow-tubing slope. A two-hour ticket is $27, a six-pack of them is $135.

After School Challenge
Ongoing
Sky Zone Boston
91B Sprague St., Boston
857-345-9693
www.boston.skyzonesports.com
Sky Zone Boston hosts an ongoing After School Challenge with fun and games on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Kids can win T-shirts and free jump passes as they tackle obstacle courses and such. The new SkyRobics 4 Kids session will start in a few weeks, too. Pre-registration is required ($75) for this fitness program designed specifically for kids ages 7 to 12.

Pajama Party
Feb. 24-25, 7 p.m.
Hotel Commonwealth
500 Comm. Ave., Boston
617-532-5017
www.hotelcommonwealth.com
Hotel Commonwealth hosts its third annual pajama party event to benefit ReadBoston. A $10 suggested donation per family includes storytelling and a hot chocolate bar. Families can make a night of it with the Commonwealth's Hotel for Kids package. Included are accommodations in a suite, morning pancake-making class at Island Creek, DVD room service with fresh popcorn and a take-home backpack stuffed with LL Bean slippers, the hotel's custom storybook and a flashlight. It's $219 per night, up to two adults and two children; additional children $49 per child; extend through the weekend at a special rate of $169/each additional night).

▶ They're never too young to hit the slopes.

Build Your Own Pancakes
Sundays
Metropolitan Club
1210 Boylston St., Chestnut Hill
617-731-0600
www.metrestaurantgroup.com
For a fun and possibly messy morning, the Metropolitan Club in Chestnut Hill has a Make Your Own Pancake Bar at brunch every Sunday. Besides pancakes, other breakfast options include cider donuts and the "Egg MET Muffin Sandwich" served with country ham, Vermont cheddar, bacon and two fried eggs. Entrees range from $6 to $24.

Spoon Ninja Competition
Feb. 29, 6 p.m.
Anna's Taqueria
446 Harvard St., Brookline
617-277-7111
www.annastaqueriaspoonninja.eventbrite.com
Anna's Taqueria's "Spoon Ninja" burrito rolling competition pitches employees and fans in a burrito-rolling contest. As in rolling one up, not rolling it down the street. Held at Anna's Harvard Street location, Anna's burrito rollers — known as Spoon Ninjas — will compete to determine the fastest burrito slinger known to Boston. Mature kids — and immature parents — can then try their luck. Each participant receives an Anna's gift card and T-shirt, but the winner takes home the "Golden Spoon" trophy.

LINDA CLARKE

▶ Hotel Commonwealth hosts a pajama party next month.

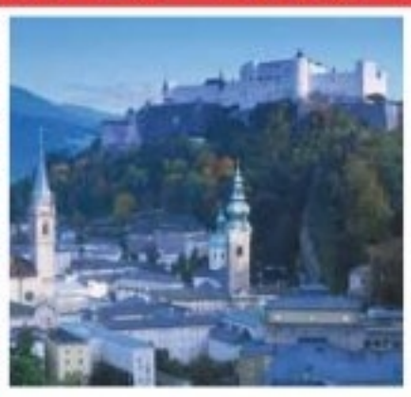
Geckos: From Tails to Toepads

DIANA TUTOS/METRO

▶ The Gecko knows!

This exhibit opened last weekend at Boston's Museum of Science. Visitors are invited to meet more than 60 geckos from 19 different regions. Throughout the exhibit are activities to test gecko IQ, find meanings to the different sounds they make and discover their amazing adaptations. Come to see some lizards, and leave a gecko expert. The exhibit is open through May.

MOZART Summer Camp
AGES 14-19
INSPIRING CREATIVITY THROUGH MUSIC



Show that you are the best. Auditions are competitive. You need to know how to shine.

At Mozart Camp, we will polish your audition repertoire, work on audition technique and impart authentic Mozart style.

Mozart Camp is a two-week summer camp in Salzburg, Austria for young singers between 14 and 19. Participants will have individual voice lessons and coaching sessions, as well as lessons in diction, German language and audition techniques.

The best music schools and conservatories are competitive. Mozart Camp will give you an edge.

To get more information, call 215.222.3500 or visit mozartcamp.org

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Letters

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Reality programs ignore crucial demo

RE: "EMILY MAYNARD IS THE CHOSEN 'BACHELORETTE'": I'm so happy you have addressed some issues with "The Bachelor"/"Bachelorette." As an African-American woman, it is disheartening to know that my ethnic background isn't suited to be represented on this show. We have the same wants and desires as anyone else. The only shows we are given are "Flavor of Love" and "Chad Ochocino."
CANDICE A. SMILEY, VIA E-MAIL

Gingrich: Ghost of Congress past

Newt Gingrich is haunting like Jacob Marley's ghost — a specter raised from the dead shackled to and dragging around the chain he forged in life: an ignominious $300,000 fine by a Republican Congress for ethics violations, an embittered ex-wife with possible toxic marital secrets, a dubious role in the disastrous housing collapse and a heavy, clamorous trail of loose-cannon shells waiting to explode.
GLENN HAYES, VIA E-MAIL

"Dems seem to be unforgiving and unaccepting unless it is your own deviants at work."

RE: "CONSERVATIVES HAVE POISONED POLITICS": Please note, Mr. LaRosa and the other writer who hates Mr. Gingrich, that at least Newt was man enough to ask his wife for an "open marriage" — unlike our President Clinton and candidate Mr. Edwards, who also served his wife divorce papers while she was undergoing breast cancer treatment. Dems seem to be unforgiving and unaccepting unless it is their own deviants at work. Also, I notice that Metro seems to be OK with the liberals going far beyond their requested 100-word maximum word submissions; they, too, seem to be more accepting of the liberal viewpoint. Furthermore Mr. LaRosa, you have the three stooges in office at this time: Obama, Biden and Pelosi.
JOHN ARSLANIAN, VIA E-MAIL

Fact-checking must include some facts

RE: "FACT-CHECKING AMERICA'S FACT CREATORS": While Mr. Simms highlighted specific quotes from each of the Republican candidates and proceeded to call those statements lies, he failed to indicate his version of the truth. He could have told us why we are not headed for a Greece-type collapse. Neither side can win with sound bites. Hard facts are required for truth to be considered.
SKIP NIELSEN, BOSTON

Please tell me the purpose of the "fact-checking" article in today's Metro. I hate to tell you, but just saying "he lied" or "that's wrong" does not prove that anyone is lying. How about some facts to contradict the garbage the GOP candidates are spouting?
ANDY NELSON, VIA E-MAIL

Will you do any fact-checking on our president's State of the Union address? Treat both sides fairly.
PETER MOL, VIA E-MAIL

Metro's promoted that nitwit social pigmy, Brayden Simms, to be its political analysis. Metro is wholly committed to biased political commentary to the point of being corrupt.
JOHN BOVINSKI, VIA E-MAIL

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

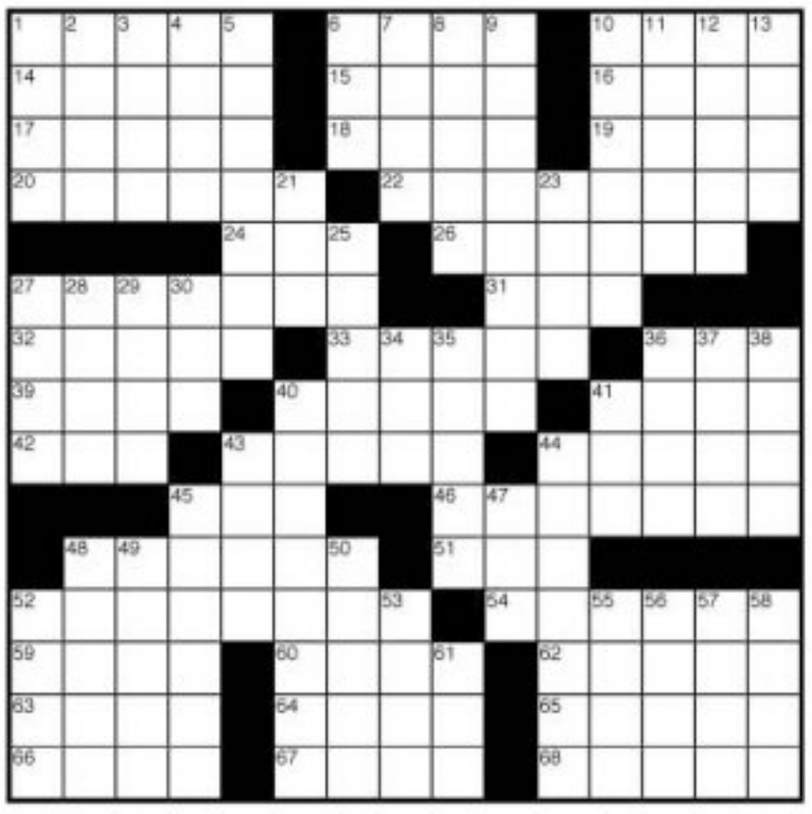
Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
Metro reserves the right to edit all letters.
Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Unfortunately, you're not suited for the role of being a borrower or a lender. Putting yourself in either position could put you behind the eight ball.
♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Even though you might solicit advice from several people, it isn't likely you will follow anyone's suggestions. You'll still erroneously do things as you initially intended.
♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Be both realistic and sensible about any of your physical limitations. For example: If you attempt to lift something that is far too heavy, you'll suffer the consequences.
♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Unless you're careful about how you conduct yourself when mixing with society, you'll be in way over your head. A slip of the tongue will get blown out of proportion.
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Don't take your luck for granted when the stakes are higher than usual. Chances are you'll miscalculate and take others down with you when it's time to pay the piper.
♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Even if you've done something that is considered to be quite outstanding, subdue temptation to boast about it. Praise will sound a lot better coming from an impressed observer.
♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** There are a lot of sticky fingers out there, so be extra watchful of your possessions — especially the stuff you keep in your car. Don't walk away.
♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Your thinking about a personal situation is apt to be right on the money, but that doesn't mean you can make judgment calls for others. You could be way off track.
♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** In situations where you are hoping to get more in return than you put out, you're likely to be greatly disappointed. There are no free rides in this economy.
♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** When invited to a social gathering at a friend's house, don't overstay your visit. Even if you're one of the late arrivals, be sure you're among those who know when to leave.
♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Guard against a strong inclination to blame a mistake that you make on another who was trying to help you out. Avoid at all costs doing anything that could make your friend feel used and unappreciated.
♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Be smart and refrain from entering into a conversation with a friend who feels just as strongly about his or her opposing point of view as you do about yours. Both parties would lose out. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

Across
1 Usefulness
6 Pate de foie __
10 Outstanding amount
14 Horse or soap __
15 Volkswagen kin
16 Axiom
17 Warren of "Dillinger"
18 Arrogant person
19 Hieroglyphics bird
20 Rains ice
22 Half-eagles, half-lions
24 911 responder
26 Happy
27 Rake in the money (2 wds.)
31 Classified section
32 Tibetan monks
33 Banded stone
36 College stat
39 Tune for a diva
40 Sibling's daughter
41 Sudden ouster
42 Impair
43 Ocean crosser
44 Formal ball
45 Drag along
46 Surfaced
48 Fork parts
51 Thus, in citations
52 Rounded up cattle
54 "Kubla Khan" locale
59 Helper
60 Goddess's statue
62 Broad valleys
63 Shiny wrap
64 Billionth, in combos
65 Ms. Lauder
66 Gridder __ Aikman
67 Troublesome bug
68 Bargain-hunts

Down
1 Romances
2 Translucent gem
3 Solar plexus
4 Leaf shedder
5 Expedites
6 Exxon product
7 Ladder part
8 Light incense to
9 Hiss
10 Snowbanks
11 Jazzman __ Blake
12 Like some alleys
13 Hardy heroine
21 The Mustangs
23 Wash out
25 Goya's home
27 Chowder bit
28 Superman's mom
29 Omani title
30 Battery size
34 Command to a horse
35 Field units
36 Percussion instrument
37 Brownish-purple
38 Mimicked
40 Trivial
41 Wheels, so to speak
43 Gill alternative
44 Century fractions
45 Eager for company
47 Mingle
48 Earlier
49 AM or FM
50 4-door model
52 Blow gently
53 Portuguese lady
55 "Candy is dandy" poet
56 A type of saxophone
57 Intense
58 Functions
61 Place to park



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	1		2			8		
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8						7	5	
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5	4		6		8		3	

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

4				5		8		
8		9		1				
2	7				3			6
1		7		2		5		
	4						2	
		8		4		6		7
7			6				8	5
				7		1		9
		4		9				2

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

E	D	G	E	■	R	A	N	I	■	P	A	R	E	R
T	E	R	M	■	A	T	E	N	■	E	M	O	T	E
C	L	U	B	■	C	R	T	S	■	A	M	A	T	I
H	I	B	A	C	H	I	■	T	A	L	O	N	E	D
■	■	■	S	H	E	A	R	■	D	E	N	■	■	■
C	H	I	S	E	L	■	O	X	I	D	I	Z	E	D
R	E	D	Y	E	■	I	S	E	E	■	A	I	D	A
A	L	E	■	R	E	V	E	N	U	E	■	L	I	I
F	I	A	T	■	M	A	T	A	■	L	I	L	T	S
T	O	L	E	R	A	N	T	■	G	L	O	S	S	Y
■	■	■	Q	U	I	■	E	A	R	E	D	■	■	■
R	E	B	U	I	L	D	■	B	O	N	A	N	Z	A
A	G	A	I	N	■	E	C	H	O	■	T	O	O	L
T	A	B	L	E	■	P	R	O	V	■	E	G	O	S
S	N	E	A	D	■	T	O	R	E	■	D	O	M	O

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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theater

Top 5 films

1 **'The Grey'** Liam Neeson has been killing it with the action movies in the last few years, and his latest — a thriller about a group of unfortunate plane crash survivors stranded in rural Alaskan territory — promises to be as fittingly chilling.

2 **'Man on a Ledge'** An ex-con (Sam Worthington) takes to the ledge of a Manhattan high-rise, claiming he was framed for a diamond heist. While Elizabeth Banks' character tries to talk him down, it becomes clear that something else is up.

3 **'One for the Money'** The only thing funnier than Katherine Heigl starring as an unlikely bounty hunter in this rom-com is that she wants back in on "Grey's Anatomy."

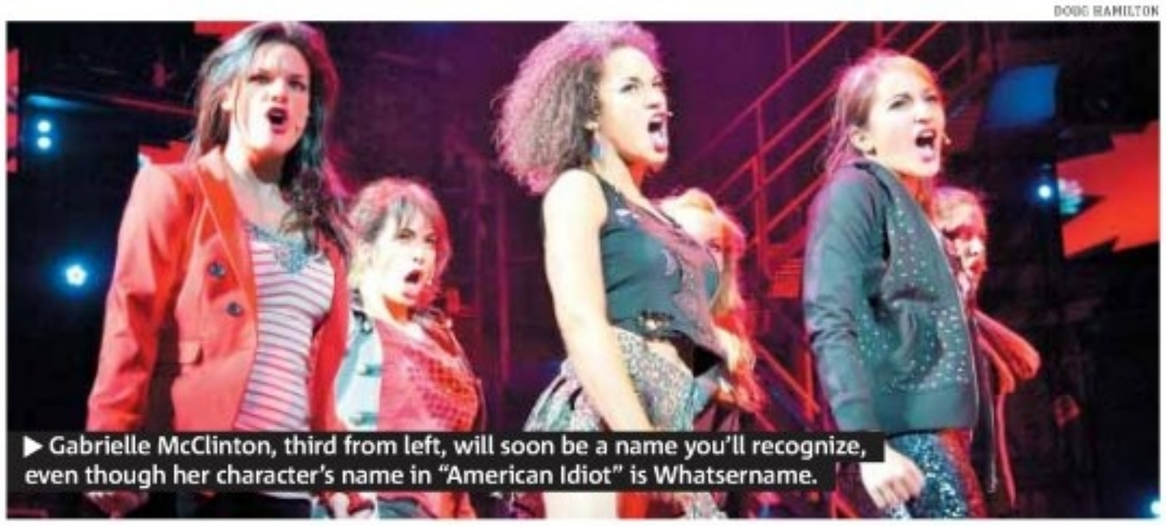
4 **'Haywire'** Steven Soderbergh can crank out one heck of an action film. This time, he places mixed-martial arts fighter Gina Carano in the center of an international assassination plot.

5 **'Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close'** This 9/11 weeper won't leave many an eye dry, especially with Tom Hanks and Sandra Bullock playing the parents of a precocious pre-teen. METRO

It's something unpredictable

And in the end you'll find that Green Day's 'American Idiot' is a musical that lets you have the time of your life

DOUG HAMILTON



▶ Gabrielle McClinton, third from left, will soon be a name you'll recognize, even though her character's name in "American Idiot" is Whatsername.

Punk rock band Green Day's 2004 anthem of angst-riddled, disenfranchised youth has become a two-time Tony Award-winning musical currently playing a far-too-short run at the Boston Opera House.

The post-9/11, Bush-fueled dissatisfaction that prompts three suburban teens to leave their 7-Eleven-shopping, TV-watching lives in search of a more meaningful existence is really just the catalyst for this engrossing musical journey. It's songs like "Jesus of Suburbia," "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," "Extraordinary Girl" and "21 Guns" that make it such a captivating story.

Though "American Idiot" feels more like rock opera than musical theater, much of this production's success is directly attributable to a stellar ensemble delivering both extraordinary musical performances and heartbreakingly real portrayals of teens stumbling their way into adulthood.

If you go

'American Idiot'
Through Sunday
Boston Opera House
539 Washington St., Boston
$33-$145, 617-259-3400
www.broadwayinboston.com

Van Hughes is exhaustingly authentic as Johnny, the young man who finds more than big dreams in the big city. By the time he sings "Wake Me Up When September Ends" you'll have loved him, hated him and finally be so glad he's made it.

Gabrielle McClinton is equally intriguing as his first love Whatsername, while Scott Campbell and Jake Epstein deliver first-rate performances as best buddies Tunny and Will.

Christine Jones' superb set, Steven Hoggett's aggressive, athletic choreography and Darrel Maloney's flashing TV screens provide the finishing touches that make this production top-notch.

NICK DUSSAULT
nick.dussault@metro.us

Plot points

'American Idiot'

Bored with life in the 'burbs, two young men flee for the big city while one stays home with his pregnant girlfriend. Their journeys are chronicled through every song from the album "American Idiot" and several from "21st Century Breakdown." Stick around for the encore; you'll have the time of your life.

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‘ALMOST DEFINITELY’

Kurt Vile on using his words carefully Philly singer says he needs deadlines to get anything done But you won’t have to wait too long for a new album

Thurston Moore isn’t feeling chatty right now, so Metro called on his opening act, Philly avant-garde rocker Kurt Vile, to shoot the breeze. Unlike the Sonic Youth frontman, Vile will play utterly solo, without his backing band, the Violators, refocusing his wonderful psychedelic songs. Might there be a chance for some intermingling of the talents of Moore and Vile, we wonder?

“We haven’t talked about playing together. So we probably won’t be,” says Vile, a cautious speaker, it seems.

“Mary Lattimore, who I’m good friends with, she plays in Thurston’s band now. She’s going to sit in with me almost definitely.”

Almost definitely (there goes that cautious thing again). “No, she will. She played on my new record. She will,” he insists.

That record, “Smoke Ring For My Halo,” brought neo-hippie Vile out of the underground experimental rock scene. He claims he’s a shy soul and growing up as one of 10 children means he isn’t desperate for company: “I’ve very much become a lone wolf,” he says.

If you go

Thurston Moore with Kurt Vile
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
Somerville Theatre
55 Davis Square, Somerville
$22.50-$25, 800-745-3000
www.livenation.com

This is the perfect constitution for an artist, in moderation. This short trek gives Vile a welcome break from prepping his next record: “I’ve been in and out of the studio in a laid-back manner, piling up songs and thinking about when I’m going to more seriously go back in, in the spring, and leisurely, but more hard-core make the record.”

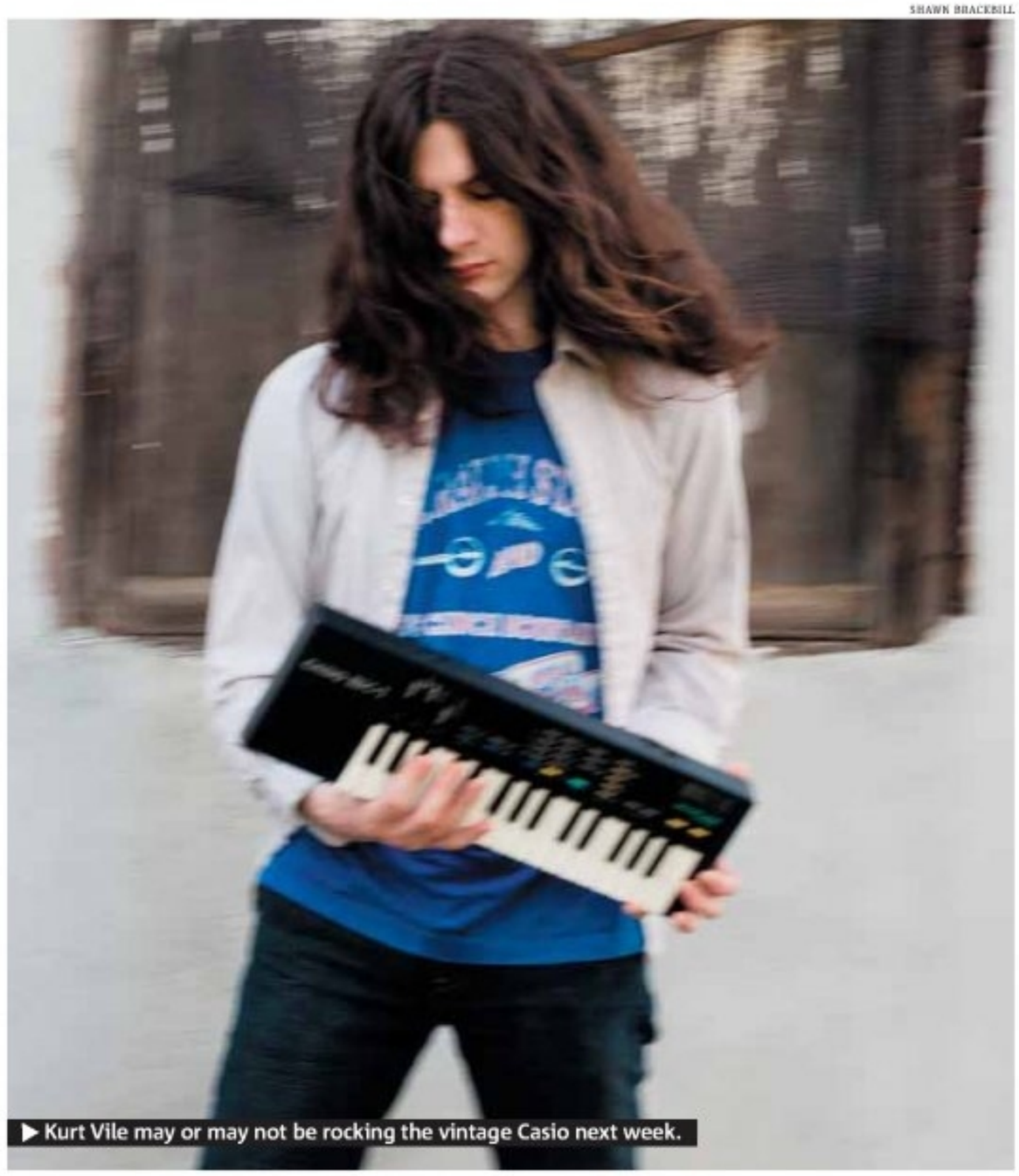
Vile doesn’t like deadlines, but says he does need them: “I get things done better with deadlines. This time I think I have enough breathing room, but knowing how it goes I’ll probably be frantically getting something in at deadline.”

LINDA LABAN
linda.laban@metro.us

Do not overthink!

Creativity can’t be rushed, Vile says, but knowing when enough is enough is the key: “If you’re sitting on one song for two months you’re doing too much. Sometimes you can get stuck in a rut and work on a song too long. It usually comes out worse because you’re overthinking it.”

SHAWN BRACKBILL



▶ Kurt Vile may or may not be rocking the vintage Casio next week.

Tickets

On sale now

▶ EOTO
Feb. 9
House of Blues

▶ Miike Snow
April 29
House of Blues

On sale soon

▶ Springsteen

▶ Van Halen
with Kool & the Gang
March 13
Verizon Wireless Arena
Manchester, NH
(On sale Monday)

▶ Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band
Wrecking Ball World Tour
March 26
TD Garden
(On sale Saturday)

▶ BU Barstool Blackout Tour
March 31
House of Blues
(On sale Friday)

▶ Say Anything
with Kevin Devine & the Goddamn Band, Fake Problems, Tallhart
April 14
House of Blues
(On sale at noon today)

Also on stage

Doodle

Tonight, 7
Community Music Center of Boston, 34 Warren Ave., Boston
$15-$20, 617-482-7494
www.cmcb.org
This concert, part of the Community Music Center of Boston’s Young Composers Festival, features the premieres of “Kaleidoscope” and “Frozen Junction,” two new works for piano, percussion and viola by Mark Berger. Also featured is R. Murray Schafer’s piece for harp, percussion and tape (“The Crown of Ariadne”) and work by Georges Aperghis (“Recitations for Soprano”).

▶ Two new works from local composer Mark Berger will be part of Doodle.

Upright Citizens Brigade

Tonight, 8
Wilbur Theatre
246 Tremont St., Boston
$20, 800-745-3000
www.thewilburtheatre.com
The most famous alumnus of this comedy troupe is probably Amy Poehler, and the demented UCB TV series from the ’90s is arguably the best thing she ever participated in, “Parks and Recreation” notwithstanding. The touring ensemble you’ll see tonight, as part of the Magner’s Comedy Festival, likely contains a few future stars. **MATTHEW DINARO**

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Will you see the next Amy Poehler tonight?

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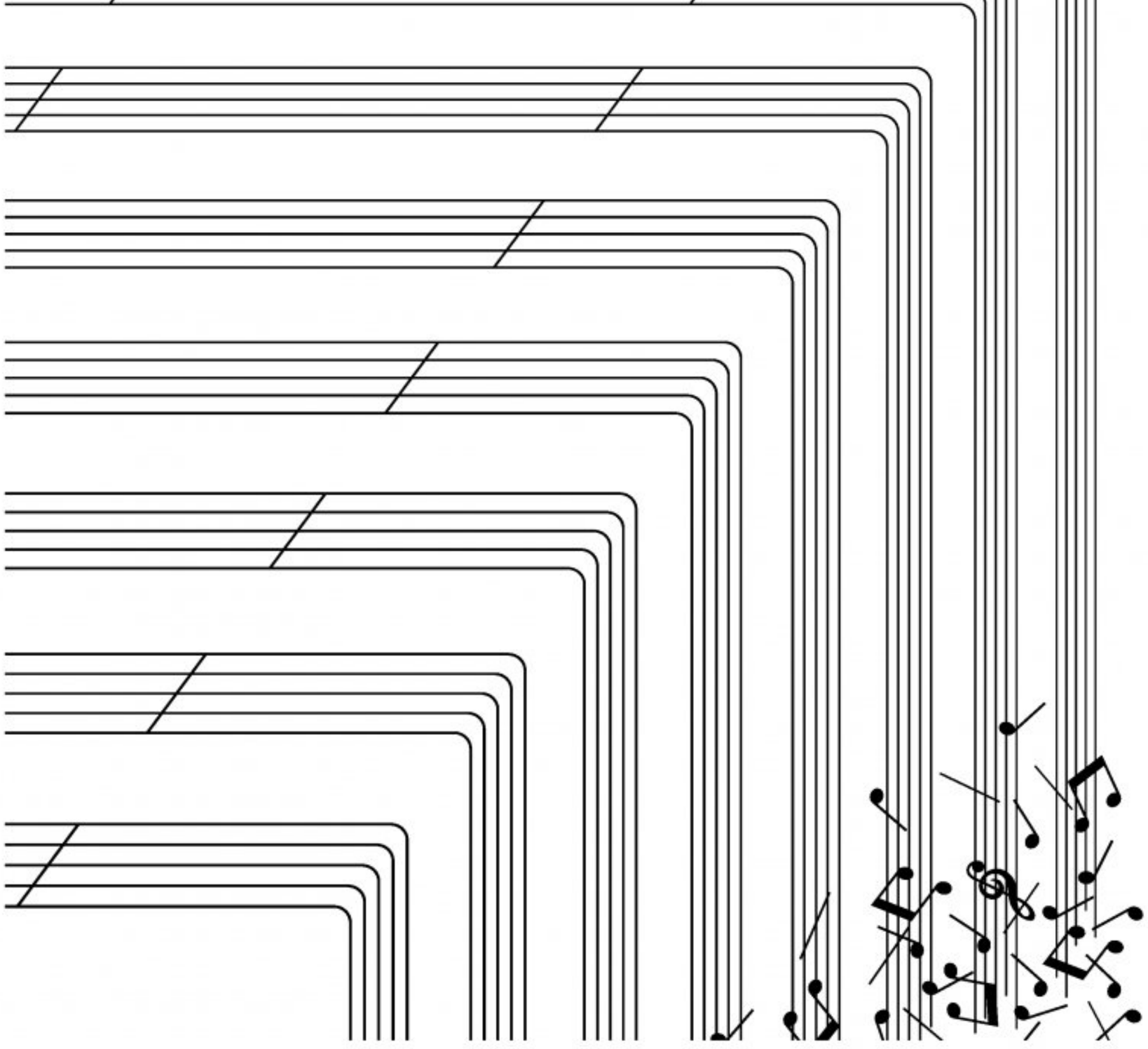

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hot tickets

Sticking to their guns

Smith Westerns love the glammy sound of vintage Bowie and T. Rex But you won't fool the children of the revolution (or get them to wear glitter on their eyelids any time soon)

When their second album, "Dye it Blonde," was released last year, Smith Westerns were saddled with comparisons to glam rock. Sure, there's a fleeting tone that says Marc Bolan and Bowie boogie, but it's only part of the Chicago trio's anthemic glistening sound.

"We're not interested in the revival aspect of things," guitarist Max Kakacek tells Metro firmly. "It's an interesting era, but the whole getting dressed up in glitter and everything — I wouldn't paint my face or anything. I don't think that we'll be wearing the clothes."

Kakacek is chatting from his apartment in Chicago. He lives there with Westerns singer Cullen Omori, whose brother Cameron fills out the lineup on bass. "We just like the sound, the way the guitars and drums were. I'm really into that, that fuzzy sound."

If you go

Smith Westerns with Porcelain Raft and Bleached
Sunday, 8 p.m.
The Paradise
967 Comm. Ave., Boston
$15, 18+, 800-745-3000
www.livenation.com

This Smith Westerns' winter tour gives them a chance to air some new songs. Kakacek anticipates a big change for album No. 3, which they hope to record soon.

"In the same way the last record moved on, we're definitely refining this [next] record: honing in on our own thing and moving forward, making the recording sound bigger and the songs sound more complex."

So what's he been listening to that could have an influence?

"It's too hard to say what will influence me, but I've been listening to a Danish prog rock band called Pan."

Prog rock here we come?

"Nah, I don't know how much that will be in the next record," he laughs.

'Deliberate choice'

After a phenomenal few years touring since the band released their 2009 self-titled debut, Kakacek says they are ready to stamp their music with a sound that says nothing but 'Hey, that's Smith Westerns, baby!"

"It's a deliberate choice on our part to keep on improving our songs, but we wouldn't be able to do that without all the touring and becoming better musicians. Doing this for a living every day improves your playing."

LINDA LABAN
linda.laban@metro.us

From left, Max Kakacek, Cameron Omori and Cullen Omori

Also on stage

Roby Lakatos Ensemble

Saturday, 8 p.m.
Sanders Theatre
45 Quincy St., Cambridge
$47-$54, 617-482-6661
www.celebrityseries.org
Lakatos' stunning chops and charismatic presence have earned him the nickname of "The Devil's Fiddler," and with good reason. Nobody plays like this guy. His sudden shifts from white-hot Gypsy shredding to long-drawn classical melodies are truly delightful.

▶ Roby Lakatos

David et Jonathas

Tonight and tomorrow
First Church in Cambridge
11 Garden St., Cambridge
$15-$50, 617-335-3330
www.heliosopera.com
Helios Early Opera presents the dramatic Marc-Antoine Charpentier adaptation of the biblical bromance of David, the future king of Israel, and Jonathan, son of Saul, the king who preceded David. David declares, upon Jonathan's death, to have loved him more than any woman, making the story relevant to the modern Christian debate over homosexuality.

On sale soon

▶ James Taylor

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Bassnectar
with VibeSquaD
April 18
House of Blues
(On sale Friday)

▶ Death Cab for Cutie
with The Magik*Magik Orchestra and Low
April 21
Citi Wang
(On sale Saturday)

▶ Portugal. The Man
with The Lonely Forest
April 22
House of Blues
(On sale Friday)

▶ Lewis Black
Running on Empty Tour
April 27
Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts, Worcester
(On sale Friday)

▶ Human Nature
The Motown Show
Presented by Smokey Robinson
May 4
The Orpheum
(On sale Friday)

▶ James Taylor
June 30
Verizon Wireless Arena
Manchester, NH
(On sale Friday)

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NEW ALBUM

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3

In the news

Oswalt coming or going?

The Red Sox have made an offer to 34-year-old free agent pitcher Roy Oswalt, according to CBSSports.com, but the former Philadelphia hurler appears hesitant to sign in Boston.

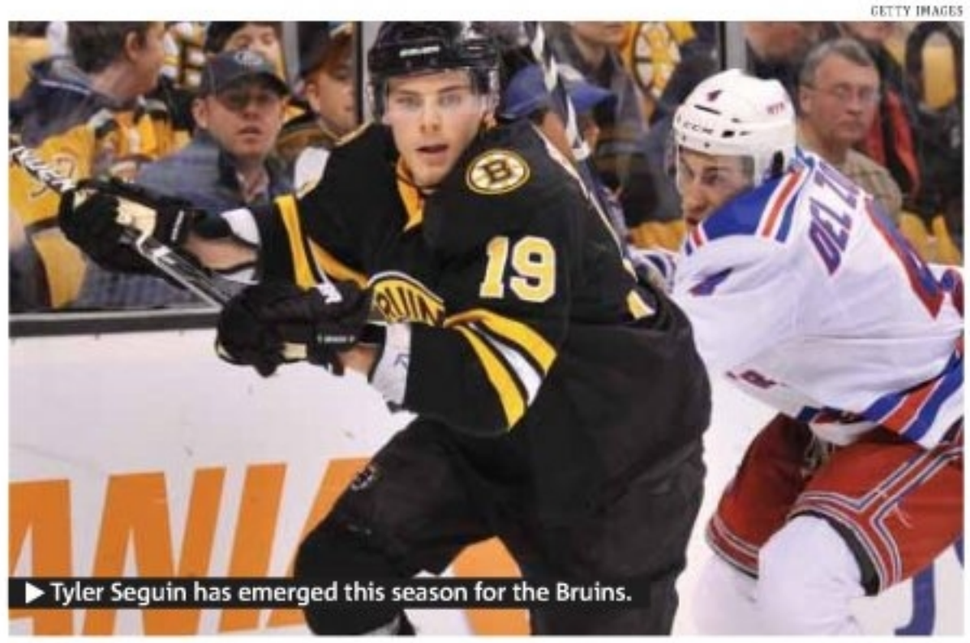
According to ESPN, the Sox have also been in pursuit of pitcher Edwin Jackson.

B's using break to gear up for another Cup run

Thomas hasn't been on point in net for the past month Julien has been vocal about team's short slump Break comes at perfect time

GETTY IMAGES

Tim Thomas is currently in a slump.



Tyler Seguin has emerged this season for the Bruins.

The Bruins ended the first half of their season on a down note, dropping a 5-3 decision to the Capitals — the day after Tim Thomas' controversial decision to skip the White House ceremony honoring the 2011 Stanley Cup title.

The Bruins would love to have the same problem to contend with next year — regardless of who invites them to the Rose Garden. With 64 points, the Bruins are second in the Eastern Conference and tied for third overall in the league. Here's three things to keep in mind in the second half of the season:

DOUBTING THOMAS?

Thomas' White House snub stirred passions and generated hot debate this week. It also masked an uncomfortable truth about the 37-year-old goaltender: The ceremony was just the latest thing Thomas missed in January.

After standing on his head the first three months of the season, Thomas has looked rather pedestrian leading up to the All-Star break this weekend, allowing at least four goals in the last eight games, after not allowing more than three in any of his first 23 games.

Keeping Thomas fresh for the postseason has always been the goal for this Bruins squad. Getting him back on his game is of equal importance.

"We've got five days to think about it and then come back refreshed, rejuvenated and playing with a lot more energy."

BRUINS COACH CLAUDE JULIEN ON THE ALL-STAR BREAK

STAY HEALTHY

The Bruins avoided any serious absences from their key players in the first half, instead dealing mostly with suspensions to the likes of Brad Marchand and Andrew Ference and minor injuries to David Krejci, Rich Peverley and now Nathan Horton, who gets five days during the break to recover from a concussion.

Only the loss of Marchand seemed to have any tangible effect on team play, as the emergence of Tyler Seguin and Benoit Pouliot has given the Bruins quality depth.

STAY FOCUSED

The Bruins were the hottest team in hockey in November and December. But their play leading into the break has been spotty, much to the consternation of head coach Claude Julien, who has been verbally stoking the fire for two weeks.

JEFF GOLDBERG
sports@metro.us

John Harbaugh

Harbaugh in 'Pats hate' minority

Ravens head coach John Harbaugh seems to be the only one in the Baltimore organization not wishing ill will on the Patriots.

Harbaugh said on the Ravens official website regarding the Gillette Stadium scoreboard late in last Sunday's game:

"We knew what the down and distance were on our last series.The scoreboard was not a factor for us. Any suggestion that the wrong down information was a deliberate effort to affect the outcome of the game is nonsense."

This came a day after Baltimore kicking consultant (whatever that is) Randy Brown hinted that the Patriots cheated by putting up the wrong down on the scoreboard prior to Billy Cundiff's shank.

Colts hire Pagano as new coach

Indianapolis hired Ravens defensive coordinator Chuck Pagano as its new head coach yesterday.

The 51-year-old Pagano has been a longtime NFL assistant, coaching in Oakland and Cleveland.

Bailey, Sox agree on deal

The Red Sox and new relief pitcher Andrew Bailey agreed on a one-year, $3.9 million contract, according to multiple reports.

The 27-year-old Bailey was acquired by Boston from Oakland in the Josh Reddick deal. METRO

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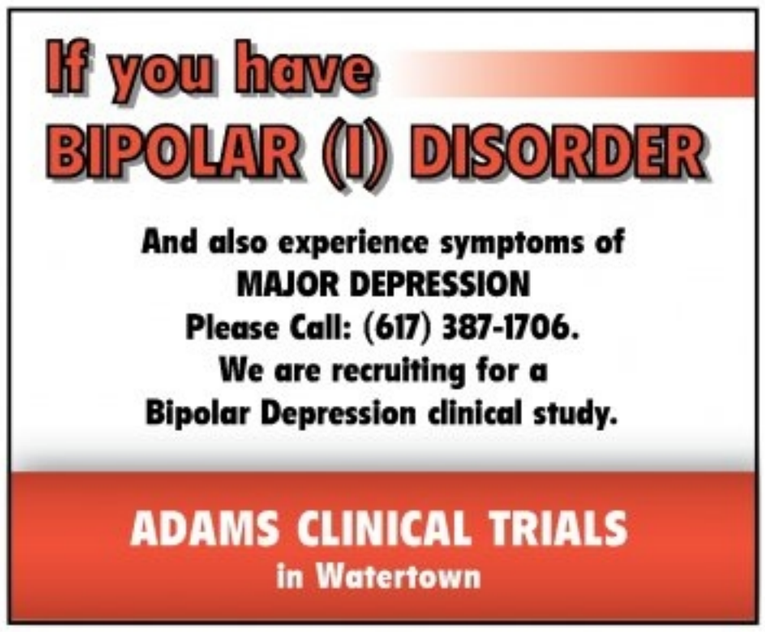
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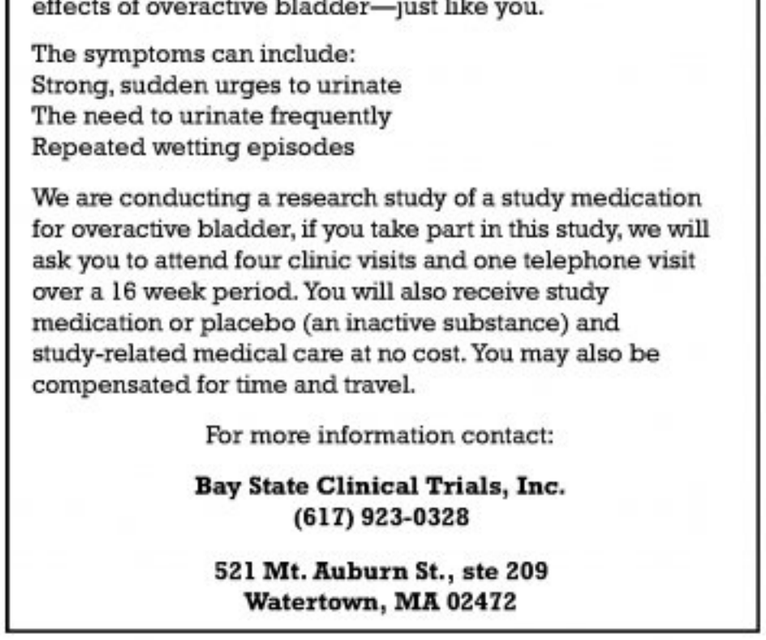
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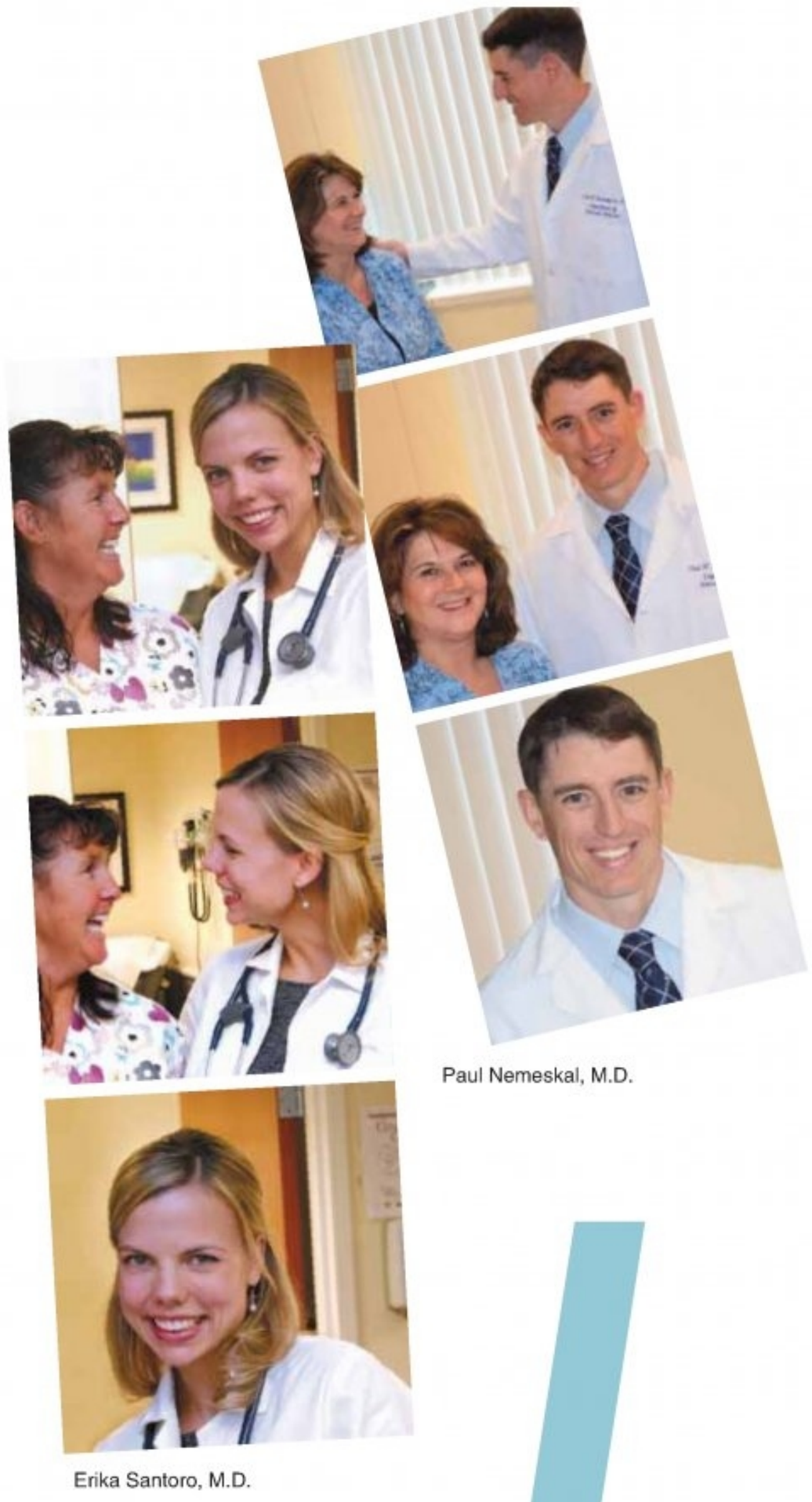

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